

Thanksgiving 2003

Senior leaders thank troops for service, sacrifices

By Gen. James L. Jones
U.S. European Command

Thanksgiving Day is a unique American holiday and custom.

Traditionally, the Pilgrims in 1621 celebrated a day of thanksgiving with local Native Americans for the bountiful harvest that nature provided them during their first year in the New World.

Throughout our nation's history, this day has evolved into the celebration and customs that we enjoy today, which for most Americans means gathering together with family and friends.

Beyond our abundant harvests and tremendous natural resources with which nature has blessed our nation, we have much for which to be thankful.

We enjoy political, economic, and religious freedoms that are a model for the rest of the world. This year, Americans can be especially proud of the continued excellence of its military and its successes around the world against the threats to our values and freedoms.

And most importantly, Americans are grateful to all of our citizens who voluntarily wear the uniform, especially those who are away from their families on this special holiday.

Diane and I would like to wish all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and civilians of U.S. European Command and their families a wonderful Thanksgiving.

During this festive occasion, please reflect for a moment and give thanks for all of the blessings that we enjoy as citizens of the United States.

For those who will not be with family this year, please know that our thoughts are with you and your loved ones during this time and that all Americans are grateful for the sacrifices that you make on our behalf.

Jones is the commander of U.S. European Command.



Jones

By Donald H. Rumsfeld
Department of Defense

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday – a reminder not only of the abundance that freedom brings, but that ours was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded on freedom.

Freedom lies at the heart of who we are, and what we believe. And for more than two centuries, our country has been blessed with men and women willing to fight and die to defend the freedom we cherish.

More than two years have passed since the beginning of the global war on terror. You have sacrificed much to protect and defend the security of your fellow citizens at home – and to liberate some 46 million others from a life of brutality and fear.

Thanks to your courage and determination, freedom is taking root today in Afghanistan and Iraq – and terrorism as an instrument of fear and oppression is being confronted and beaten back. That is an achievement for which we can be truly grateful.

And so, we give thanks for our freedom, and for all of you, who guard and protect it every day. We are thankful also for your families, who sacrifice so that you might serve.

We are grateful for our friends and allies who stand with us in the war on terror and for each U.S. Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine – and those of our allies – who have given their lives in the cause of freedom.

Thank you for all you do. May God bless and protect you this day and always. And may He continue to bless the United States of America.

Rumsfeld is the U.S. secretary of defense.



Rumsfeld

President pays surprise visit to troops serving in Baghdad

By Gene Harper
American Forces
Press Service

About 600 troops who gathered for Thanksgiving Day dinner in Baghdad had a surprise guest: their commander in chief, President George W. Bush.

Under the security of darkness and tight-lipped staff secrecy, the president arrived in Baghdad on Thanksgiving Day at Baghdad International Airport for a reported two-and-a-half-hour visit.

Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, Combined Joint Task Force 7 commander, and Coalition Administrator L. Paul Bremer were completing remarks to Soldiers of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Armored and 82nd Airborne divisions and other guests when Bush walked into the area and up to the podium.

A stunned crowd of Soldiers

jumped to their feet and hailed him with sustained, thunderous applause and shouts of "hooah."

The president's watery eyes showed his reaction.

"I was just looking for a warm meal somewhere, Bush said. "Thanks for inviting me."

"I can't think of a finer group of folks to have Thanksgiving dinner with than you all," the president said. "Today Americans are gathering with their loved ones to give thanks for the many blessings in our lives. And this year

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George W. Bush
U.S. President



Bush

we're especially thankful for the courage and the sacrifice of those who defend us, the men and women of the United States military.

"I bring a message on behalf of America: We thank you for your service. We're proud of you, and America stands solidly behind you," he said.

"Together you and I have taken an oath to defend our country," Bush told the troops. "You're honoring that oath. The United States military is doing a fantastic job. ... I'm proud to be your commander in chief."

News & Notes

Tree-lighting ceremonies set

Christmas tree-lighting ceremonies will be held on Stuttgart-area installations on the following dates:

- Dec. 9. – Kelley Barracks flag pole
- Dec. 10 – Patch Barracks Chapel
- Dec. 11 – Robinson Barracks Community Club
- Dec. 12 – Panzer Kaserne Chapel

All ceremonies will start at 5 p.m., and will be followed by a reception with Santa Claus.

RB renovation project underway

A renovation project that will affect the fitness center, School Age Services, Youth Services and library has begun in Robinson Barracks' building 151.

This project will continue for the next few months and patrons may experience minor inconveniences as work progresses. For more information call 421-2089/civ. 0711-729-2089.

Gift wrap helps service members

Holiday gift wrapping services will be available at the Patch Barracks PX on a donation-only basis on the following dates:

- Dec. 5 – 5 to 6 p.m.
- Dec. 6 – 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Dec. 7 – noon to 6 p.m.
- Dec. 12 – 5 to 6 p.m.
- Dec. 13 – 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Dec. 14 – noon to 6 p.m.

Proceeds will help brighten the holidays for service members in Iraq and those recovering in Landstuhl Army Medical Center. Volunteers are also needed.

For details call 0711-305-7175 or e-mail simpson@6asg.army.mil.

CYS sponsors 'Parents Night Out'

Parents can take a night for themselves Dec. 5, when Child and Youth Services will watch their children, 6:30 to 11 p.m.

This special night is open to all children registered with CYS. For details call 430-7480/civ. 0711-680-7480.

Girl Scouts seek members

The Stuttgart Girl Scout program is always on the lookout for new members and adult volunteers.

To learn more about these opportunities call Patricia Walker at 0711-674-0829, e-mail stuttgartgirlscouts@hotmail.com or visit www.stuttgartgirlscouts.com.

Oriental belly dancing classes

Interested in learning the art of belly dancing? Classes are Wednesdays, 7 to 9 p.m., in the Patch Barracks FitnessCenter.

Classes include stretching, strength training, basic moves, choreography and discussion of culture and music. The first class is free.

For details call 430-4512/civ. 0711-680-4512.

ADHD support group meets

The next ADHD support group meeting is Dec. 10, noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Army Community Service classroom. All community members are welcome to attend.

The theme is "Supporting Your Child's Education." Participants are invited to bring a sack lunch.

To register call 430-7176/civ. 0711-680-7176.

Santa has e-mail

Children of all ages are encouraged to send their wish lists and their mailing addresses directly to Santa this year. All e-mailed wish lists received by Dec. 20 will receive a personalized postcard in the mail within three weeks from St. Nick himself.

All e-mail wish lists should be addressed to Santa.Claus@mail.estripes.osd.mil. Those who prefer to write Santa a letter should mail it to Santa Claus, North Pole, APOAE 09211.

Goose holds Christmas market

The Gussy Goose craft store will hold a Christmas crafters bazaar Dec. 7, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The *Kleine Weihnachtsmarkt* will feature handmade items by local crafters. For details call 430-5270/civ. 0711-680-5270.